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## Parenting styles and parents' attitudes toward learning and performance in their children

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PARENTING STYLES AND PARENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARD  
LEARNING AND PERFORMANCE IN THEIR CHILDREN

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A Thesis  
Presented to the  
Faculty of  
California State University,  
San Bernardino

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Masters of Arts  
in  
Psychology:  
Child Development

---

by  
Chaoping Violet Wang

December 2006

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## ABSTRACT

The current research attempted to show that parenting styles are directly related to parents' goals (learning or performance) with respect to their children's education. Parents' goals, and the behaviors they motivate, were assumed to be a mechanism accounting for well-established effects of parenting style on children's school achievement. In the authoritative style, parents frequently take the time to explain particular rules and guidelines as well as recognizing their roles and responsibilities in addition to those of their children. By contrast, the authoritarian style of parenting places more significance on obedience; these parents seldom exhibit warmth and tend to be cold, harsh, and non-supportive. It was expected that authoritative parents would be more likely to adopt a learning goal orientation with their children. On the contrary, it was expected that authoritarian parents would be more likely to adopt a performance goal orientation with their children. The sample consisted of 223 undergraduate college mothers enrolled in psychology courses. The results indicated that parents' use of an authoritative style was positively related to their adoption of learning goals with respect to their child, as evident, for example, in their

use of a process focus and indirect homework assistance strategies. Moreover, mothers' use of an authoritarian style was positively related to their adoption of performance goals, as evident in their use of a product focus. Results are discussed in terms of goal theory and the limitations of self-report methods.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Next, it is important to note the contributions from Dr. Yuchin Chien, California State University-San Bernardino and Dr. Laura Kamptner, California State University-San Bernardino for their professional counsel, advices and suggestions. Dr. Chien and Dr. Kamptner have both taken the time and effort to support this research with their busy schedules. Their advices and suggestions has brought this research from where it was to its' final destination.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### Overview

A number of research studies have shown that parenting styles are linked to levels of achievement and learning in children (e.g., Chen, Dong & Zhou, 1997; Gottfried, Fleming & Gottfried, 1994; Gonzales, Greenwood & Hsu, 2001; Gonzales, Holbein & Quilter, 2002; Grolnick & Ryan, 1989). However, the mechanism by which these parenting styles might influence learning and achievement has not been established. One possibility is that these overall styles engender or foster a specific goal orientation in parents that is then manifested in specific interactions with children such as homework assistance or providing evaluative feedback about their child's school activities. Some parenting styles may lead parents to develop more of a learning goal orientation with respect to their child while others may move parents toward more of a performance goal orientation. According to Ricco, McCollum & Schuyten (2003), college mothers' endorsement of learning goals, their use of child-centered, indirect assistance strategies with their children, and their adoption of a process focus

in making evaluative statements are positively related to their children's attitudes towards learning.

The purpose of the current study was to show that parenting styles are directly related to parents' goals (learning or performance) with respect to their child's education. These goals will be assessed in a variety of ways. As a direct measure, we will present parents with statements describing learning and performance goals and ask parents to indicate the extent to which they endorse these. As indirect measures, we will have parents self-report on the specific homework assistance strategies they favor, the approach they utilize in providing feedback and evaluation, and whether or not they believe that their efforts are having success in supporting their child's learning. The current study will assume that parents' academic goal orientation (learning versus performance), in turn, influences their child's goal orientation thereby producing the relationships that have been found between parenting styles and children's academic outcomes. Prior evidence to this effect will be discussed below. In the current study, we will focus mainly on two parenting styles - authoritative and authoritarian parenting.

## Goal Orientation In Children And Adults

Research on achievement orientation indicates that there are two general categories of goals that students adopt in an academic setting - *learning (or mastery) goals* and *performance goals* (Kaplan, 2002; Midgley, Laplan, Middleton, & Maehr, 1998). Students who adopt learning goals interpret challenging activities as opportunities to advance one's skills and learning in an area. These students are intrinsically motivated and possess a positive attitude when challenging tasks are presented before them (Gonzales et al., 2002). Students with a learning goal orientation often consider that their ability in an area can be improved through effort (incremental theory of ability). They are self-motivated and genuinely interested in mastering new skills and contents while persisting in the face of frustration and challenge during the learning process (mastery behavior). Learning-goal-oriented students often speak up in class and offer questions to challenge the status quo (Elliot & Church, 1997).

It is generally acknowledged that there are two types of performance goals - *performance-approach* and *performance-avoidance goals* (Pintrich, 2000; Ricco et al., 2003). Students adopting a performance orientation see

academic tasks as opportunities to obtain tangible evidence of their competence or ability level in a particular area. The extrinsic reward of looking good or not looking bad to oneself and others takes precedence over any inherent interest in a task and may take precedence over learning (Kanriol & Ross, 1977; Pintrich & De Groot, 1990). Children who adopt performance goals perceive their intelligence and ability as relatively fixed. They believe that people are born with a certain amount of intelligence or ability, which cannot be changed through effort (Gonzales et al. 2001). These children's preference in choosing tasks and problem solving approaches is based upon their concerns in regards to their own competence level and proving themselves to be adequate or, at least, not inadequate (Dweck, 1986). Students maintaining *performance-approach goals* want to outperform and execute better than others while sticking with tasks that are familiar. Students in this category often put forth less effort and are less likely to persist if they encounter significant obstacles. Frequently, these students are generally interested in learning but they are more strategically concerned about their grades while unwilling to take risks (Elliot & Church, 1997) unless they are very confident of their

capabilities. In contrast, students with a *performance-avoidance* orientation circumvent challenging tasks, regularly fail to strategize proper problem solving techniques, and tend to breakdown in the face of sustained failure. Feelings of being inferior and a tendency to attribute failure to lack of ability best characterize the performance-avoidant student (Ames, 1984).

Previous research (e.g., Ames, 1992; Ames & Archer, 1987; Dweck, 1986; Kamins & Dweck, 1999; Ricco et al., 2003) has suggested a variety of methods by which parents' own achievement goal orientations might influence their child's achievement goals. For instance, the teaching strategy a parent employs when assisting the child on homework and the type of evaluation the parent provides the child vary as a function of the parents' goal orientation (Ricco et al., 2003). Parental engagement in homework assistance is an example of the most immediate, face-to-face form of parental involvement in the child's life, facilitating and supporting their overall sense of well being (Balli, Demo & Wedman, 1998). Parents who have a learning goal orientation tend to favor *indirect teaching strategies* when providing the child with homework assistance. Specifically, the responsibility for completing

the academic task is seen as resting with the child while the parents act as a resource to provide support and guidance. Parents utilizing these strategies frequently offer their children a high level of guidance (Renshaw & Gardner, 1990). Indirect teaching strategies are considered student-centered while stressing the importance of self-pacing, patience, and the use of trial and error. These strategies help promote a sense of creative thinking in children so that they can consider different forms of strategic approaches to a dilemma and discover new concepts at the same time (Ricco et al., 2003). Moreover, this style of assistance enables children to integrate new ideas and materials with what they already possess. Indirect teaching strategies are often time-consuming due to the use of questions and informative statements rather than a directive for the child to arrive at the correct conclusion.

Learning-goal-oriented parents also tend to adopt a *process focus* in providing evaluative feedback. Learning-oriented parents frequently value their child's effort and perseverance while errors and mistakes are viewed as part of the learning experience and serve as informative guides (Kaplan, 2002; Gonzales et al., 2002). When providing

evaluative feedback, these parents emphasize the learning process rather than meeting objective standards of academic accomplishment. Furthermore, these parents view success as the consequence of the child's efforts rather than innate ability. This process focus emphasizes personal improvement, effort, strategy, and the approach to the problem (Kaplan, 2002). Thus the learning-oriented parent often acts as an indirect resource to guide the child in a verbal and nonverbal manner during the learning experience (Renshaw & Gardner, 1990). For instance, the use of praise and criticism varies depending on a parent's goal orientation and may establish and influence the child's sense of self-worth (Kamins & Dweck, 1999). Learning-oriented parents direct their praise and criticism towards effort, the approach to the problem, or the required skill or knowledge (Ricco et al., 2003). The main focus is to have the child explore and learn through discovery. The adoption of a process focus by parents is associated with positive attitudes towards learning in children (Ricco et al., 2003).

Renshaw & Gardner (1990) suggest that parents with a performance goal orientation frequently employ *direct teaching strategies* and provide person- or product-based



feedback. A direct teaching strategy is adult-centered and takes away the responsibility for task completion from the child thereby eliminating the need for development and improvement. These parents are more controlling and this technique may ensure immediate, tangible evidence of adequacy - but not necessarily long-term learning (Ricco et al., 2003). Performance-oriented parents often downplay the opportunity for exploration and the critical thinking steps potentially present in an academic task. Children are frequently halted from utilizing an erroneous approach rather than being permitted to discover this on their own. The child may be told of the correct solution or the specific path to take in order to arrive at the conclusion without further explanation concerning the strategies or methods involved (Gonzales et al., 2001).

Performance-oriented parents regularly employ a *person/product focus* in providing feedback and evaluation. This method is focused on meeting school or social standards of performance. Normative standards would frequently include grades, test scores, praise from teachers and administrators, as well as being compared with high achieving peers (Ames & Archer, 1987). Mistakes and errors are viewed as failures and parents who provide this

kind of feedback convey the notion that performance is a direct measure of ability, thus neglecting the role of effort. Children exposed to person/product feedback eventually develop a sense of contingent self-worth by focusing on traits that measure their performance. Hence, this strategy can create vulnerability and influence the perception of the child's self-worth when faced with performance setbacks (Kamins & Dweck, 1999). Product-focused parents are somewhat insecure about their skills and abilities in guiding their children. They tend to be more anxious and concerned with the developmental progress of their children (Renshaw & Gardner, 1990).

#### Parenting Styles And Parent Goal Orientation

Parenting style often provides a significant indicator of parental influence that can in turn predict the well being of a child (Baumrind, 1967). The three parenting styles as developed by Diana Baumrind (1967) differ in their approaches, values and behaviors. They also differ in the principles that children are expected to adopt, the ways in which these values, behaviors and principles are transmitted, and in parents' expectations regarding the behavior of their child (Dornbusch, Ritter, Leiderman,

Roberts & Fraleigh, 1987). The three traditional parenting styles are authoritative, authoritarian and permissive (Baumrind, 1967; Gonzales et al., 2001; Chen et al., 1997). However, as mentioned before, this research study will focus on the authoritative and authoritarian styles of parenting and the mechanisms by which it is linked to the level of achievement and learning in children.

In the authoritative style, parents explain particular rules and guidelines as well as placing less emphasis on strict compliance. Authoritative parents regularly encourage conversational exchanges with their children while being flexible in response to the child's contributions (Gonzales et al., 2001). Parents employing this style also take the time and effort to discuss with the child the reasoning behind their guidance. Authoritative parents often tend to value both expressive and instrumental attributes in addition to autonomous decision-making and disciplined conformity by the child (Baumrind, 1967). This parenting style is typically reflected in the frequent employment of supportive and inductive techniques in child rearing (Chen et al., 1997). Authoritative parents frequently exert firm control at points of parent-child divergence but do not hinder

autonomous development with relentless restrictions (Dornbusch et al., 1987). In addition, authoritative parents recognize their own role and responsibilities as adults while at the same time being aware of the child's individual needs and interests (Gonzales et al., 2002). Baumrind (1967, 1971) suggests this parenting style is one that clearly involves high parental demands, emotional responsiveness, and recognition of the child's individual needs. Moreover, authoritative parents regularly manage their child's activities, but in a rational issue-oriented way due to the fact that they are concerned with the child's personal mastery skills (Ginsburg & Bronstein, 1993). These parents also affirm the child's individual qualities, attributes and assets, while also setting standards and guidelines to direct the child (Chen, et al., 1997).

Authoritative parenting is one of the most consistent family predictors of competence from early childhood through adolescence (Baumrind, 1967). Placing more importance on fostering a child's sense of autonomy may help prepare children for an academic environment that requires self-regulated behavior and may help children develop the sense of intrinsic motivation that underlies

mastery goal behaviors (Gonzales, et al., 2002).

Authoritative parents are more inclined to accept the child's uniqueness and provide love, respect and feelings of equality; this would result in the child being able to experience and develop their own strength by conquering challenges and finding satisfaction in their achievements and contributions (Dominguez & Carton, 1997; Grolnick & Ryan, 1989). Children from authoritative households exhibit more adaptive patterns of achievement motivation characterized by seeking challenging tasks and high, effective persistence in the face of obstacles (Dweck, 1986). Students are frequently encouraged to correct mistakes and to find significance in their work (Buri, Louiselle, Misukanis, & Mueller, 1988). Students are also offered reasonable progressive challenges and permitted to develop their own personal strategy/approach to problem solving. Thus, parents who employ the authoritative parenting style have children who are concerned with academic engagement in school, improving their ability, increasing their self-reliance, and reaching personal mastery (Dominguez & Carton, 1997; Gonzales et al., 2001). Likewise, previous research has found that the

authoritative parenting style is positively related to children's academic performance (Chen et al., 1997).

The authoritative style of parenting would seem to entail or imply the adoption of learning goals by a parent with respect to their child's education. This is suggested by the above findings that this parenting style promotes positive attitudes towards learning in children and the fact that the use of indirect strategies and process feedback are each consistent with the emphasis on autonomy, self-regulation, and guided learning that typify authoritative parenting (Kamins & Dweck, 1999).

By contrast, the authoritarian style of parenting places more significance on obedience. Authoritarian parents do not exhibit warmth and tend to be cold, harsh, and non-supportive. They frequently tend to shape, control, and evaluate the behavior and attitudes of the child in accordance with a set of standards of conduct (Baumrind, 1967). They often emphasize and value strict obedience as an asset and favor punitive, forceful measures to curb self-will at points where the child's actions or beliefs conflict with what the parents perceive as correct or appropriate conduct (Baumrind, 1967; Chen et al., 1997; Gonzales et al., 2001; Gonzales et al., 2002).

Authoritarian parents emphasize and value respect, preservation of order and authority, discipline, and punishment. Moreover, they do not encourage or accept verbal give and take because they frequently consider their decision to be final whether at home, social gatherings, or even in school (Clayton & Rowley, 2004). This parenting style seems to be associated with children who exhibit extrinsic motivational values, maintain a sense of dependence on authority figures, and possess a tendency to withdraw from difficult academic events and activities (Gonzales et al., 2001). These children are often concerned with pleasing their parents or an authority figure by aiming to prove their ability, performing better than others, and being smarter than their peers with little or no concern for personal mastery (Pintrich, 2000). Children raised in authoritarian homes are thus likely to have a performance orientation and performance-avoidant goals.

It seems likely that authoritarian parenting styles engender in parents a focus on performance rather than learning. That is, it seems likely that authoritarian parents would employ direct homework assistance strategies and product- focused evaluation techniques while attempting to control the child's approach to academic tasks (Ames &

Archer, 1987; Kamins & Dweck, 1999; Renshaw & Gardner, 1990). With direct teaching strategies, much of the responsibility in the problem solving process is taken away from the child. The child is placed in a passive role where they are not actively participating in the problem solving process (Dominguez & Carton, 1997). At the same time, direct teaching strategies do not provide the child with guidance about the necessary procedures to take should an error occur. Similarly, parents using these strategies display a significant sense of impatience as well as frustration in the child and with themselves (Gonzales et al., 2001). These characteristics are consistent with an authoritarian style. Arguably, authoritarian parents do not enable their children to become active participants in the problem solving process, as they take away their opportunity to build self-reliance and independence (Renshaw & Gardner, 1990). Authoritarian parents seldom recognize their roles as facilitators of their child's efforts to actively engage the learning environment. Authoritarian parents' high demands combined with low warmth may force children to experience less pleasure in their tasks and subsequently discourages exploratory learning (Chen et al., 1997). In other words, persistence



and perseverance are not encouraged whereas conformity and helplessness are induced. Authoritarian parents would be expected to be more concerned that their children prove their ability rather than improving their skills. They push their children to meet performance standards such as grades or test scores and tend to compare the child's abilities to those of their peers (Dweck & Elliot, 1983; Gonzales et al., 2001; Gottfried et al., 1994; Pintrich, 2000). Authoritarian parents are less warm and comforting due to the fact that they perceive the child's success as a measure of their own self-worth.

To summarize, then, previous research (e.g., Chen et al., 1997; Gonzales et al., 2001; Gonzales et al., 2002; Gottfried et al., 1994; Grolnick & Ryan, 1989) has suggested that Baumrind's parenting styles are linked to levels of achievement and learning in children, but the mechanism by which these parenting styles might influence learning and achievement is less clearly established. The present study proposes that parenting style influences children's achievement by leading parents to adopt a particular goal orientation in their interactions with their child. The purpose of the current study is to establish a relationship between college mothers' parenting

styles/practices and their attitudes toward learning and performance in their children. It was expected that college mothers who describe themselves as using a more authoritative style of parenting will be more likely to adopt a learning goal orientation with their child. This orientation should be evident in their: 1. choice of learning goals over performance goals with respect to their child's education, 2. tendency to prefer a process focus and the use of indirect assistance strategies in interacting with their child, and 3. preference for learning-oriented feedback and criteria of success. On the other hand, college mothers who report more of an authoritarian parenting style will be more likely to adopt a performance goal orientation with their child. This orientation should be evident in their: 1. choice of performance goals over learning goals with respect to their child's education, 2. tendency to prefer a product focus and the use of more direct assistance strategies in interacting with their child, and 3. preference for performance-oriented feedback and criteria of success. Stated in terms of correlation-based analyses, it was expected that mothers' use of authoritative parenting will be positively related to their endorsement of learning

goals, a process focus, indirect strategies of assistance, and learning-oriented feedback, and will be negatively related to their endorsement of performance goals and a product focus. It was also expected that mothers' use of authoritarian parenting will be positively related to their endorsement of performance goals and a product focus and negatively related to their endorsement of learning goals, a process focus, indirect strategies, and learning-oriented feedback.

## CHAPTER TWO

### METHOD

#### Participants

The sample for this study consisted of 223, working-class mothers (median family income of 30K to 40K) enrolled in undergraduate Psychology courses at a California State University campus in Southern California. All mothers had a child between the ages of 6 and 12 years. Participants ranged in age from 20 to 64 years (Mean Age = 32 years; SD = 7.64). Over half of the participants (N=124) were single mothers. Also, 98 were Caucasian, 30 were African American, 82 were Hispanic, 6 were Asian, 2 were Pacific Islander, and 5 were of mixed ethnicity. Approximately 86% of the mothers were biologically related to their child. All participants reported providing at least some homework assistance to their child on a regular basis (mean time spent helping on homework per week = 160.97 minutes; SD = 134.88). The children serving as the focus of the mothers' responses ranged in age from 6 to 12 years (mean age = 8.56 years; SD = 2.12). There were 112 girls and 111 boys.

## General Procedures

Participants received all measures in the form of a questionnaire and were tested individually in the human development behavioral lab (SB-143) at the university. The order of the individual measures was randomized within and across participants and the procedure lasted about 40 minutes. In this study, the following materials were used: one informed consent form, one demographic sheet, one parenting measurement packet, and a debriefing statement. The informed consent form explained the purpose of the study and informed parents that they were to select one of their children in the 6-12 range and consistently respond to the questionnaire as it related to that particular child. Moreover, in the event that a participant had more than one child within this age range, the instructions specified that she was to select the child with whom she spends the most time assisting with homework activities. At the conclusion of the study, each participant received a written debriefing statement, were thanked for their participation, and provided with appropriate contact numbers.

## Measures

In this study, participants completed self-report measures of parenting style and academic goals related to their child. The following measures were presented to college mothers by way of a questionnaire. The specific measures may be found in the appendix. The Parental Attitudes Questionnaire-Revised (Reitman, Rhode, Hupp, & Altobello, 2002) was utilized in measuring mother's parenting style. In addition, there were various methods employed to evaluate mother's academic goals for their children. The most direct measure was the Parent Goals for Child (adapted from Midgley et al., 1998), which assessed the extent to which mothers endorsed learning or performance goals for their child. The Indirect Teaching Strategies Scale (adapted from Ricco et al., 2003) addressed homework assignments involving math problems and assessed the extent to which mothers used indirect guidance and supported self-paced learning. Likewise, the Process Focus and Person/Product Focus Scales (Ricco et al., 2003) examined the extent to which mothers emphasized the importance of the learning process and of performance factors (respectively) when evaluating their child's schoolwork. In addition, the School Success/Feedback

Ranking (Ames & Archer, 1987) measured mothers' preference for learning-based or performance-based information about their child's schoolwork. With the exception of the latter measure, each of the measures required participants to specify the extent to which they agree with the statements provided by way of a 5-point scale that ranged from "not at all" (1) to "very much" (5). The reliabilities provided below are based upon the sample used in this research.

Parental Attitudes Questionnaire-Revised. This is a 30-item measure (Reitman, Rhode, Hupp, and Altobello, 2002) of several defining features of Baumrind's three parenting styles: *Authoritative Style* (9 items;  $\alpha = .82$ ) - emphasis is on parental use of reasoning and explanation, the involvement of children in the decision-making process, and the overall importance of providing rational assistance and guidance for children. *Authoritarian Style* (10 items;  $\alpha = .77$ ) - emphasis is on the parent as the main decision-maker for the child and on the use of authority and power to induce strict obedience and conformity. *Permissive Style* (9 items;  $\alpha = .73$ ) - emphasis is on the importance of parental non-interference and of respect for children's autonomy. Two of the original items were dropped (from the Authoritative and Permissive scales) due to the fact that

they would significantly lower the internal consistency of the scales. The score range for Authoritative style, Authoritarian style, and Permissive style is 9-45, 10-50, and 9-45 respectively. A higher score indicates a strong endorsement of the style described in the statements for that scale.

Parent Goals for Child. This is an 18-item measure that assesses the academic goals that a parent prefers for her child. It is adapted from the Midgley et al. (1998) goal orientation scales and consists of three subscales - a Learning or *Mastery Goals Scale* (6 items;  $\alpha = .78$ ) and two Performance Goal Scales - *Performance-Approach* (6 items;  $\alpha = .80$ ) and *Performance-Avoidance* (6 items;  $\alpha = .85$ ). Individual items are completions of the stem, "I hope that...". Learning goal items consist of statements that endorse activities leading to or involving learning or mastery of a skill (e.g., "...my child prefers schoolwork that he/she can learn from, even if it means making a lot of mistakes"). Conversely, performance items consist of statements that would stress the importance of getting positive feedback and praise (Approach) while avoiding negative feedback (Avoidance) on academic tasks (e.g., "...my child wants to be the only one who can answer the teacher's



questions." "...the main reason my child does his/her schoolwork is to avoid looking stupid to the teacher"). The score range for Learning goal, Performance-Approach goal, and Performance-Avoidance goal is 6-30, 6-30, and 6-30 respectively. A higher score indicates a strong endorsement of the type of goal assessed in the statement. Scores for the Performance-Approach and Performance-Avoidance scales were combined for the analyses in the present study. This is because the theoretical framework for this research does not distinguish between approach and avoidance.

Indirect Teaching Strategies Scale. The extent to which mothers subscribe to the use of homework assistance strategies that involve indirect guidance and support of self-paced, discovery learning are assessed by way of a 10-item scale ( $\alpha=0.73$ ) (Ricco, McCollum, and Schuyten, 2003). While other scales employed in this study are worded in a general way such as might apply to a number of academic domains in the mothers' or child's educational activities, the Indirect Strategies Scale addresses homework assignments involving math problems. This content is selected because it presents an opportunity for a parent to employ a wide range of strategies in assisting her child

and because it allows for a clearer description of individual strategies. These strategies include encouraging the child to reflect on the approach she has been taking, helping the child to break the problem down into a series of steps, and restating the problem in familiar, everyday terms (see the Appendix for individual items). The instructions will ask participants to imagine that their child has come to them for help on a math problem. Participants indicate how likely they are to provide the kind of help described in the statement by using a 5-point scale ranging from "not at all likely" (1) to "very likely" (5). The score range is 10-50. When negatively worded items are reverse-scored, higher scores indicate a greater reported likelihood of using an indirect strategy.

Process Focus Scale. This is a 10-item measure (Ricco, McCollum, and Schuyten, 2003) ( $\alpha = .70$ ) that examines the extent to which a parent focuses on the attributes of the learning process in considering their child's schoolwork. These characteristics include the importance of effort and the method or strategy employed in performing the tasks, the role of challenges involved to support the learning process, and the experience gained from mistakes and errors. Each of the items will consist of a statement

describing one or more of these characteristics of learning (e.g., "I'd like the teacher to see the mistakes my child makes on his/her homework so the teacher appreciates where my child needs help." "With good study habits and hard work, almost any child can develop a solid understanding of the subject matter."). The score range is 10-50. A higher score indicates more of a process focus.

Person/Product Focus Scale. This 12-item measure (Ricco, McCollum, and Schuyten, 2003) ( $\alpha = .72$ ) examines the extent to which a parent focuses on their child's performance in terms of tangible results that exemplify the child's intelligence in academic activities. The individual items refer to the participant's child and assert the importance of achieving positive outcomes (e.g., good grades) and avoiding negative outcomes (mistakes on schoolwork) or ascribe performance outcomes to the child's natural ability rather than to effort, preparation, or approach (e.g., "Trying your best on schoolwork doesn't win many points with me if the outcome is still a poor grade." "My child's success at school is the result of his/her natural ability."). The score range is 12-60. A higher score indicates more of a person/product focus.

School Success / Feedback Ranking. This measure was developed by Ames and Archer (1987) to examine a parent's focus on learning and performance aspects with respect to their child's schoolwork. The task consists of two parts. The first part asks the participants to rank five *criteria of success* at elementary and middle school in terms of their relative importance to the parent. The criteria are getting good grades, performing as well or better than other children, behaving well, working hard, and showing improvement. The second part of the measure asks participants to rank order six forms of *feedback* about their child. These feedbacks consist of grades on tests and homework assignments, performance relative to other students, appropriateness of behavior, performance relative to norms, amount of effort being expended, and progress or improvement. The criteria of success and the types of feedback that concern effort or hard work and progress or improvement is considered learning items while the remaining types of criteria/feedback are considered performance items. The learning items from parts one and two were reverse-scored such that a higher ranking of these items by a participant is now reflected in a higher score. The performance items were not reverse-scored and so a

lower ranking of the performance items also contributes to a high score. A single, composite score was then generated for the task by averaging across the eleven items from parts one and two. The composite score reflects the extent to which a participant favors learning over performance with respect to their child's school activities. The higher the score, the more learning factors took precedence over performance factors for that participant.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESULTS

An initial series of correlations was conducted to determine whether any potential confounds are operating in the study. Results indicated that none of the demographic variables in the study (e.g., mother's age, family income, age of child reported on) were related to either of the parenting style measures (r-values ranged from .02 to .09). For this reason, no control variables were included in the regression analyses reported below.

#### Relation of Parent Goals to Parenting Styles

As an initial test of the hypotheses, a series of correlations was conducted of the various parent goal measures with each parenting style (authoritative, authoritarian). Results are presented in Table 1 and are generally consistent with the hypotheses of the study. Authoritative parenting was positively related to the adoption of learning (mastery) goals by mothers, their use of a process focus, and their endorsement of indirect homework assistance strategies, and was negatively related to mothers' adoption of performance goals and the use of a

product focus. Thus mothers who described themselves as more authoritative in their approach to parenting were more likely to choose learning goals over performance goals and more likely to focus on the learning process rather than performance outcomes in evaluating their child's schoolwork. They were also more likely to endorse indirect assistance strategies in helping their child with homework. Authoritarian parenting was positively related to the adoption of performance goals by mothers and to their use of a product focus, and was negatively related to their success/feedback ranking. Thus mothers who described themselves as more authoritarian were more likely to choose performance goals for their child and to adopt a product focus in evaluation. They also preferred performance-oriented school feedback about their child.

*Table 1. Correlations of parent goal measures with parenting style*

Parent Goal Measures	Parenting Style	
	Authoritative	Authoritarian
Learning goal	.34**	-.10
Performance goal	-.29**	.33**
Process focus	.41**	-.11
Product focus	-.28**	.42**
Indirect strategy	.48**	-.04
Success/Feedback ranking	.06	-.23*

\*p< 0.01

\*\*p<0.001

### Regression Analysis of Parenting Styles

In order to assess the relative importance of the different goal measures as predictors of parenting style, two stepwise regressions were conducted. Although parenting style is conceived of as an influence on parents' goals for their child in this study, data analyses will treat parenting style as a criterion and the various measures of parent goals as predictors. In this way, the number of correlations can be minimized and error accumulation



controlled.

The full set of goal measures was regressed first on authoritative parenting and second on authoritarian parenting. Thus the predictor set for each regression consisted of mothers' learning goal score, performance goal score (approach and avoidance scores combined), process focus score, product focus score, indirect strategies score, and school success/feedback ranking. A stepwise procedure was employed such that the order of entry for the predictors was determined empirically rather than theoretically. Results indicated that the use of indirect strategies,  $\beta = .34$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , and the adoption of a process focus,  $\beta = .23$ ,  $p < 0.002$ , were both positively related, and the adoption of performance goals,  $\beta = -.26$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , was negatively related, to authoritative parenting,  $R^2 = .34$ ,  $F(3,148) = 24.82$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . Thus, mothers' learning goals and adoption of a product focus, though significantly related to authoritative parenting, were redundant predictors and did not gain entry into the model. Results for the regression on authoritarian parenting indicated that the use of product focus,  $\beta = .35$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , was positively related to authoritarian

parenting,  $R^2 = .12$ ,  $F(1, 150) = 20.94$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . For this regression, mothers' adoption of performance goals and their preference for performance-related school feedback were redundant predictors. In general, more aspects of mothers' goal orientation were independently important predictors of authoritative parenting than of authoritarian parenting.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DISCUSSION

#### Summary of Results

Prior empirical studies have suggested that parenting styles are linked to levels of achievement and learning in children (e.g., Ames et al., 1987; Chen et al., 1997; Gottfried et al., 1994; Gonzales et al., 2001; Gonzales et al., 2002; Grolnick & Ryan, 1989). Specifically, the use of authoritative parenting is associated with children's school success while the use of authoritarian parenting, particularly in Caucasian populations, is associated with more problematic academic performance by children (Ames et al., 1987; Chen et al., 1997; Gonzales et al., 2001). The present research was designed to establish the mechanisms by which parenting styles/practices might influence learning and achievement in children. The specific mechanism proposed in this study concerns parents' academic achievement goals for their child, which, it is claimed, are engendered by a particular parenting style.

Ricco et al. (2003) noted that the academic achievement goals college mothers adopt and exhibit in interacting with their child are reflected in the child's

goals (Ames & Archer, 1987). In particular, mothers with more of a learning goal orientation with regard to their own education showed a greater involvement in their child's schoolwork, maintained a process focus in evaluating their child, and endorsed indirect teaching strategies (Ricco et al., 2003). Their children, in turn, were more positively disposed toward learning. Mothers having more of a performance goal orientation as college students maintained more of a product focus with their child and were less likely to use indirect teaching strategies. Their children, in turn, were more likely to adopt performance goals at school. Thus, not only is parenting style linked to learning and achievement in children, but also parents' achievement goal orientation is linked to children's own achievement goals. This strongly suggests that parents' goal orientation, particularly with respect to their child's academics, is the mechanism by which parenting style may influence children's achievement at school.

It was expected that college mothers who describe themselves as using a more authoritative style of parenting would be more likely to adopt a learning goal orientation with their child. This orientation should be evident in their: 1. choice of learning goals over performance goals

with respect to their child's education, 2. tendency to prefer a process focus and the use of indirect assistance strategies in interacting with their child, and 3. preference for learning-oriented feedback and criteria of success. On the other hand, college mothers who report more of an authoritarian parenting style should be more likely to adopt a performance goal orientation with their child. This orientation should be evident in their: 1. choice of performance goals over learning goals with respect to their child's education, 2. tendency to prefer a product focus and the use of more direct assistance strategies in interacting with their child, and 3. preference for performance-oriented feedback and criteria of success. Stated in terms of correlation-based analyses, it was expected that mothers' use of authoritative parenting would be positively related to their endorsement of learning goals, a process focus, indirect strategies of assistance, and learning-oriented feedback, and would be negatively related to their endorsement of performance goals and a product focus. It was also expected that mothers' use of authoritarian parenting would be positively related to their endorsement of performance goals and a product focus and negatively related to their endorsement of learning

goals, a process focus, indirect strategies score, and learning-oriented feedback.

The present findings provide some indirect support for the claim that parent goals are the mechanism linking parenting style to children's school achievement.

Specifically, these findings show that mothers' academic achievement goals for their children are associated with the mothers' child rearing style. Mothers' use of an authoritative parenting style was positively related to their adoption of learning goals with respect to their child, as evident, for example, in their use of a process focus and indirect homework assistance strategies, and was negatively related to their adoption of performance goals and their use of a product focus. Moreover, mothers' use of an authoritarian style was positively related to their adoption of performance goals, as evident in their use of a product focus, and was negatively related to their preference for learning-oriented feedback about their child.

Parents' achievement goals for their child, evident in the way they evaluate their child and assist their child on academic tasks, can influence the child's own academic goals and achievement motivation (Dweck & Elliot, 1983;

Dweck & Leggett, 1998; Gonzales et al., 2001; Ricco et al., 2003). Parents approach collaborative tasks with their children differently depending on the parent's goal orientation. Their teaching strategies and the types of evaluation they make and the feedback they provide depend upon their goals for their child (Renshaw & Gardner, 1990; Ricco et al., 2003). One can propose that the relationship between parent's goal orientation and children's goal orientation is due to the fact that students are motivated, in part, by the particular focus or interest the parent takes in the child's schoolwork (Gonzales et al., 2002). Through their goal orientation, parents are sending a message about the significance and importance of academic tasks.

Some parents interpret their child's school assignments as an opportunity for their child to employ better learning strategies, select challenging tasks, take self regulated approaches, explore or discover, and process information deeply through strategies such as elaboration and organization (Gonzales et al., 2001). The application of a process focus by parents in providing praise and guidance has been linked to the development of learning goals in children (Ames & Archer, 1987; Chen et al., 1997).

Previous empirical work (Dweck & Elliot, 1983) indicates that parents who adopt a process-oriented approach act more as resources rather than judges and place more emphasis on the learning journey rather than the outcome while responding to errors as natural and useful, rather than undesirable, occurrences. These parental attitudes can influence the child's perceptions of her intelligence and ability when experiencing performance setbacks (Kamins & Dweck, 1999). Such parenting practices may predispose and induce children toward learning goals (a repertoire of mastery skills that increases through perseverance and effort) rather than performance goals (intelligence and ability is revealed through performance) (Dweck & Elliot, 1983). On the contrary, some parents interpret performance outcomes as a direct measure of their child's intelligence and ability and interpret academic success in terms of meeting normative standards and gaining social acceptance (Chen et al., 1997; Dweck & Leggett, 1998). This adoption by parents of a person/product approach to feedback will promote and encourage the development of performance goals in children (Dweck & Elliot, 1983; Kamins & Dweck, 1999).

The present findings show that parent's academic goals for their child, and their related attitudes toward their



child as a student, are tied to parents' style of parenting. The same parents who embrace and highlight the importance of exploratory-learning, and stress the value of self-pacing and personal mastery rather than achieving tangible results (Ames & Archer, 1987; Ricco et al., 2003) are the parents who take time to explain rules and guidelines and welcome their child's input when making decisions. An indirect teaching approach accentuates and places greater responsibility on the child in the same way that encouraging children to question rules and provide input to decisions does (Ames & Archer, 1987). On the other hand, parents who utilize a direct teaching approach when providing homework assistance or that focus on performance standards and products are the same parents who employ authoritarian practices (Ames & Archer, 1987) such as placing emphasis on strict obedience, discouraging early autonomy, and being overly protective or concerned with the developmental progression of their children (Renshaw & Gardner, 1990).

The findings from this study suggest that parenting styles/practices and attitudes are associated with parents' learning and performance goals for their children. The academic achievement goal orientation adopted by parents

and the approach that they employ in interacting with their child over schoolwork appears to be a function of their broader parenting styles. In turn, parents who interpret learning outcomes as the result of hard work, academic engagement, and learning to master new skills are promoting learning goals in their children. On the contrary, parents who view performance outcomes as a measure of intelligence and who view school as an opportunity to get good grades and meet normative standards are not promoting learning in their child.

#### Limitations and Future Directions

This study does have several limitations that future researchers should address. First, and perhaps most importantly, is a concern over subject sophistication. The participants in the current study were primarily from psychology classes and they do not adequately represent the general population. Some studies have demonstrated that psychology students behave differently from naïve participants in psychological experiments. Certain effects that cannot be found by using naïve participants may be found by using psychology students. Secondly, the sample consisted of mothers only. The way that fathers view

academic achievement, learning, and performance may be different from those of mothers (Grolnick & Ryan, 1989). Therefore, the results of this study cannot be generalized to the male population. Third, the study is merely correlational and so it is difficult to establish that parenting goals are, in any sense, the result of parenting styles. With additional data collection, however, it would be possible to employ structural equation modeling and to test causal models. Finally, it should be noted that the data were collected using self-report methods. Corroboration of the findings using observational methods would strengthen the conclusions.

In future studies it would be interesting to conduct this research by using gender as one of the independent variables. This design would make it possible to see if there is a significant difference between mothers and fathers in the relationship between parenting style and parent goals for their child. A most obvious follow-up to the present study would be to replicate it with the inclusion of children and to test for the full set of relationships claimed in the present study. That is, can evidence be obtained that shows both the relationship between parenting style and parent goals as well as the

connection between parent goals and children goals? Again, in this regard, with a sufficient sample size, causal models could be tested.

The results of this study can be the basis for several recommendations to educators. Teachers should be encouraged to de-emphasize the importance of grades, test scores, and other performance measures. They need to make learning more interesting and stress discovery-based, self-paced aspects of learning. This becomes particularly important in light of the focus on performance standards as part of the "No Child Left Behind" policies. Such policies may lead both teachers and parents to focus on "correct answers" rather than understanding. In addition, the present results make clear the need for teachers and other educators to replace authoritarian classroom management styles with more authoritative styles.

APPENDIX A  
PARENTAL ATTITUDE QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY

### **Parental Attitudes Questionnaire**

For each of the following statements about parenting, circle the number on the 5-point scale that indicates **HOW MUCH YOU AGREE** with the statement. Please respond to each statement with respect to children in the elementary school years (ages 6 to 12).

- |       | <b>not at all</b> | <b>not very much</b>   | <b>somewhat</b> | <b>pretty much</b> | <b>very much</b> |
|-------|-------------------|--|-----------------|--------------------|------------------|
|       | <b>1</b>          | <b>2</b>   | <b>3</b>        | <b>4</b>           | <b>5</b>         |
| _____ | 1.                | In a well run home, the children should have their way in the family as often as the parents do.   |                 |                    |                  |
| _____ | 2.                | Even if children don't agree with their parents, it is for their own good if they are forced to conform to what the parents think is right.  |                 |                    |                  |
| _____ | 3.                | When a parent tells her children to do something, she is entitled to expect them to do it without asking any questions.  |                 |                    |                  |
| _____ | 4.                | Once family policy has been established, a parent should discuss the reasoning behind the policy with the children.  |                 |                    |                  |
| _____ | 5.                | Parents should encourage verbal give and take whenever their children feel that family rules and restrictions are unreasonable.  |                 |                    |                  |
| _____ | 6.                | Children need to be free to make up their own minds and to do what they want to do, even if this does not agree with what their parents want.  |                 |                    |                  |
| _____ | 7.                | Once a parent has made a decision, she should not allow her children to question it.   |                 |                    |                  |
| _____ | 8.                | Parents should direct the activities and decisions of the children in the family through reasoning and discipline.   |                 |                    |                  |
| _____ | 9.                | Parents should use more force (than they typically do) in order to get their children to behave the way they are supposed to.  |                 |                    |                  |
| _____ | 10.               | A child shouldn't obey rules and regulations of behavior simply because someone in authority has established them.   |                 |                    |                  |
| _____ | 11.               | Parents should make clear to their children just what they expect of them, but they should also allow the children to discuss those expectations with them if they feel they are unreasonable. |                 |                    |                  |

- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. Wise parents should teach their children early just who is boss in the family.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. A good parent seldom gives her children guidelines and expectations for their behavior.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. In making family decisions, parents should do what their children want.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. Parents should give their children direction and guidance in rational and objective ways.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. Parents are entitled to feel angry if their children try to disagree with them.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. Most problems in society would be solved if parents would not restrict their children's activities, decisions, and desires as they are growing up.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 18. Parents should let their children know what behavior they expect from them, and if those expectations are not met, the children should be disciplined.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 19. A parent should allow her children to decide most things for themselves, without a lot of direction from the parent.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 20. Parents should take their children's opinions into consideration when making family decisions, but they should not decide for something simply because the children want it.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 21. I don't view myself as responsible for directing and guiding my children's behavior.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 22. Parents should have clear standards for their children but should be willing to adjust those standards to the needs of each individual child in the family.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 23. parents should provide direction for their children's behavior and activities, but should be willing to listen to their children's concerns and to discuss that direction with them.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 24. A good parent allows her children to form their own point of view on family matters and to decide for themselves what they are going to do.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 25. Most problems in society would be solved if we could get parents to strictly and forcibly deal with their children when they don't do what they are supposed to do.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 26. Parents should often tell their children what they want them to do and how they expect them to do it.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 27. A parent should give clear direction for her child's behaviors and activities, but should also understand when her children disagree with her.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 28. Parents should not direct the behaviors, activities, and desires of the children in the family.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 29. Parents should insist that their children conform to the parent's expectations simply out of respect for the parents' authority.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 30. If a parent makes a decision that hurts the feelings of her children, she should be willing to discuss that decision with them and to admit it if she made a mistake.



APPENDIX B  
PARENT GOAL FOR CHILD SURVEY

### Parent Goals for Child

*The following survey asks you to think about your wishes or hopes for your child. Each statement below is a completion of the stem, "I HOPE THAT...". Please use the scale below to tell us HOW MUCH YOU AGREE with each statement.*

<b>not at all</b>	<b>not very much</b>	<b>somewhat</b>	<b>pretty much</b>	<b>very much</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>

### *I HOPE THAT...*

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. my child prefers schoolwork he/she can learn from - even if it means making a lot of mistakes.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. my child wants to be the only one who can answer the teachers' questions.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. the main reason my child does his/her schoolwork is to avoid looking stupid to the teachers or other students.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. the main reason my child does his/her schoolwork is because he/she likes to learn new things.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. my child wants to do better than the other students in class.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. the main reason my child does her schoolwork is to avoid embarrassing himself/herself.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. my child prefers schoolwork that really makes him/her think.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. my child cares whether or not the other students at school think that he/she is good at schoolwork.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. the main reason my child does his/her schoolwork is so the teachers don't think he/she knows less than others.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. the main reason my child does his/her schoolwork is because he/she wants to get better at it.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. my child feels successful when he/she is doing better than most of the other students.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. one reason my child would not participate in class is to avoid looking stupid.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. the main reason my child does his/her schoolwork is because he/she is interested in it.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. my child wants to show his/her teachers that he/she is smarter than the other students.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. the main reason my child does his/her schoolwork is so others won't think he/she is dumb.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. the main reason my child does his/her school work is because he/she enjoys it.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. doing better than other students in school is important to my child.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 18. one of my child's main goals is to avoid looking like he/she can't do his/her work.

APPENDIX C  
PROCESS FOCUS AND PERSON/PRODUCT  
FOCUS SCALES SURVEY

### Parent Evaluative Focus (Process Focus and Person/Product Focus Scales)

Below are a number of statements concerning your child's school and homework. Please use the following scale to indicate HOW MUCH YOU AGREE with each statement.

**not at all      not very much      somewhat      pretty much      very much**

**1**

2

3

4

5

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. It is important to me that my child get better grades than the other children at school.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. I don't expect my child to work very hard at a subject that he/she just isn't good at.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. I would rather see my child working hard than getting good grades.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. I feel like a failure when my child doesn't do as well as the other kids at school.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. My child's success at school is due to hard work and having the right attitude.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. I want others to think that my child is smart.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. I would like the teacher to assign homework problems that my child will learn a lot from, even if he/she won't look so smart.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. With good study habits and hard work almost any child can develop a solid understanding of the subject matter.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. When my child struggles or makes mistakes on homework assignments, I sometimes wonder whether he/she has the ability to do well at school.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. My child's success at school is the result of his/her natural ability.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. Its much more important to me that my child learn things at school than get good grades.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. I would like the teacher to assign homework problems that aren't too hard, so my child doesn't get many wrong.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. Even when my child gets the right answers on his/her homework, I check to make sure he/she really understands why the answers are right.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. If I find a mistake on my child's homework, I might correct it myself before the teacher finds it.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. I think that showing improvement is more important than getting good grades.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. It is important to me that my child turns in homework that doesn't contain any mistakes.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. Children can improve their ability considerably when a parent regularly works with them on their homework.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 18. I might give my child extra homework problems so I can be sure he/she really has a good grasp on the lesson.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 19. Trying your best on schoolwork doesn't win many points with me if the outcome is still a poor grade.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 20. I'd like the teacher to see the mistakes my child makes on his/her homework so the teacher appreciates where my child needs help.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 21. I know how much my child has learned by looking at his/her grades.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 22. Even if a child is failing in a subject they can still improve to the point where that might become their best subject.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 23. Although I hate to admit it, I sometimes would rather my child did well in a class than learn a lot.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 24. A child could receive a poor grade for the term in a subject and still have learned and understood quite a lot in that subject.

APPENDIX D  
HOMEWORK ASSISTANCE SCALE SURVEY

### **Indirect Assistance Strategies Scale**

Imagine a situation in which your child comes to you for help on a **math problem** that is part of his/her homework assignment for the next day. The statements below each describe ways in which you might help your child. Use the following rating scale to **indicate how likely you are to provide the kind of help described in the statement.**

- |       | <b>not at all<br/>likely</b> | <b>not very likely</b>   | <b>somewhat likely</b> | <b>pretty likely</b> | <b>very likely</b> |
|-------|------------------------------|--|------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
|       | <b>1</b>                     | <b>2</b>   | <b>3</b>               | <b>4</b>             | <b>5</b>           |
| _____ | 1.                           | Tell my child how to solve the problem and then watch to make sure he/she does it correctly.   |                        |                      |                    |
| _____ | 2.                           | Try to get my child to think about the approach he/she is taking on the problem and what the limitations of that approach might be.  |                        |                      |                    |
| _____ | 3.                           | Find another problem just like it in the book and have my child watch me as I demonstrate how to arrive at the correct answer.   |                        |                      |                    |
| _____ | 4.                           | Tell my child to skip this one and let the teacher show him/her how to do it during school.  |                        |                      |                    |
| _____ | 5.                           | Try to guide my child through the problem by breaking it down into a series of steps.  |                        |                      |                    |
| _____ | 6.                           | Show my child how this problem is similar to others that the child already knows how to solve.   |                        |                      |                    |
| _____ | 7.                           | Give my child the correct answer so they can finish their homework and get credit for doing it.  |                        |                      |                    |
| _____ | 8.                           | Provide some hints or suggestions and see if my child can do the rest for himself/herself.   |                        |                      |                    |
| _____ | 9.                           | Take the problem and restate it in terms of some situation that is familiar to my child from his/her daily life.   |                        |                      |                    |
| _____ | 10.                          | Show my child a trick or simple way to do this kind of problem that will give him/her the right answer even though he/she may not understand why its right or why the trick works. |                        |                      |                    |



- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. Ask my child to show me what he/she has been doing so far to try and solve the problem.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. Tell my child where in his/her book or other materials it explains how to do this kind of problem and have him/her read it and try again.

APPENDIX E  
PREFERRED SCHOOL SUCCESS AND  
FEEDBACK SURVEY

### Perceptions of School Success

Here are five aspects of student behavior. Please rank order their importance for doing well in **elementary school**. Place a '1' next to the aspect that you consider most important to success, a '2' next to the aspect that you consider the next most important to success, etc.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Getting good grades.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Showing improvement.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Working hard.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Behaving well (getting along with others and following rules).
- \_\_\_\_\_ Doing as well as or better than others in class.

### Preferred School Feedback

Progress reports, report cards, and parent-teacher conferences yield feedback of various kinds about your child. Below are several different types of feedback that schools provide to parents. Please rank order their importance for you as sources of information about your child. Place a '1' next to the type of feedback that you consider most important, a '2' next to the feedback that you consider the next most important, etc.

- \_\_\_\_\_ My child's grades on tests and assignments.
- \_\_\_\_\_ My child's performance relative to other children in the class.
- \_\_\_\_\_ How much progress or improvement my child has made.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Amount of effort my child is making.
- \_\_\_\_\_ How well-behaved my child is (getting along with others and following rules).
- \_\_\_\_\_ Performance relative to norms that have been established for my child's grade or age.

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